

Alabama Guardsman

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A publication for the citizen-Soldiers & Airmen of Alabama



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New era begins as Smith takes over as Adjutant General

Contributed

Public Affairs Office AL NG

MONTGOMERY, AL - The Alabama National Guard welcomed Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith as the new Adjutant General in a ceremony Sunday, January 16, at the newly built Joint Force Headquarters Armed Forces Readiness Center in Montgomery. Smith took over the reins from Maj. Gen. Abner C. Blalock, the Alabama Guard's most senior officer since 2007. Governor Robert Bentley selected Smith in December to head the Alabama Army and Air National Guard.

Smith retired from the Alabama Army National Guard in 2008. However, under the Alabama Constitution, governors can call a Guardsman back to duty to serve as Adjutant General. The Adjutant General is a state cabinet position, though the individual selected must be a federally recognized Army or Air Force general officer.

Smith graduated from Auburn University in 1973 and immediately commissioned as a second lieutenant in the Army. Smith joined the Alabama



Doug Howard/photo

Maj. Gen. Perry Smith stands with Governor Robert Bentley during a Change of Command ceremony in Montgomery January 16.

National Guard in 1975 and had a long, varied career, moving as high Chief of Staff for the 167th Theater Support Command before serving a three-year tour on active duty as Deputy Commanding General for National Guard Affairs with Army Materiel Command just prior to his retirement.

The Adjutant General is the leader of the Alabama National Guard, in command of both the Alabama Army and Air National Guard. As such, he is responsible for more than 13,000 Soldiers and Airmen and billions of dollars of facilities and equipment throughout the state.

"There is no greater organization of

which to be a part than the Alabama National Guard," Smith said. "The Alabama National Guard is made up of dedicated Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen, full time Soldiers and Airmen, and civilian employees of the highest character and caliber. I'm humbled and very fortunate to be a member of the Alabama National Guard again. I'm also very grateful to Governor Bentley for giving me the opportunity to lead this fantastic group of patriots. I look forward to doing the best I can to maintain the Alabama National Guard's prominent position as the best National Guard in the United States."

Alabama Guardsman

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On the Cover

Flag bearers from all five Major Commands of the Alabama Army National Guard and the Alabama Air National Guard stand at attention during a Change of Command ceremony in Montgomery January 16. At the ceremony, Maj. Gen. Abner Blalock handed the reins of the Alabama National Guard to the new Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith (photo by Doug Howard).

Adjutant General

The Alabama Guard faces the challenges of 2011



**Maj. Gen.
Perry Smith**

Welcome to another a new year –2011. Along with this New Year comes some leadership changes for the Alabama National Guard. January 17, our new commander-in-chief, Gov. Robert Bentley, was inaugurated

and I was fortunate enough to be selected by him to be his Adjutant General.

As we begin this year, I want to share a few things that I think are key to the continued

success of the Alabama National Guard. The leadership has changed but our mission and focus has not changed. We will continue to prepare and to deploy in support of overseas operations and to assist our fellow Alabamians in any time of need. We will continue to train to be ready, relevant and available as an OPERATIONAL FORCE. We must continue to place emphasis on service member and family resilience. We will be successful in our obligation to our members, our state and our nation.

We have significant challenges ahead of us, challenges which I have full faith that you will meet with the same excellence and professionalism with which the members of the National Guard have met challenges for the last 374 years.

In order to ensure that we continue to meet these challenges with distinction, I charge all

leaders to mentor your Soldiers and Airmen on a personal level. Ensure and demand that your warriors are pursuing their professional development schools. Promote those who are eligible and counsel young service members on developing their career path. As leaders, we must continue to guide and mentor the leaders of tomorrow's Alabama National Guard.

I thank you in advance for ensuring that your own character and integrity remains beyond reproach. Please continue to examine yourself to be sure you are living the values on which the United States military is based.

I am proud and humbled to be a part of the Alabama National Guard! It is a tremendous organization and I look forward to working with you as we go forward to meet the challenges before us. Lead from the front!

State Command Sergeant Major

New year a time for change, preparation and resolutions



**Command Sgt.
Maj.
William H. Jones**

I hope that everyone had a great New Year and made all the usual New Year's resolutions. The New Year always signals reflection and change for me. Well welcome to the changing of the guard. We have a new TAG;

I would like to

welcome Maj. Gen. Perry Smith on board and assure him that the Alabama National Guard will succeed and perform beyond the standard just as we did for Maj. Gen. Blalock.

It has been almost one year since

I assumed duties as the State Sergeant Major and I hope that I have lived up to my end by representing the Soldiers and Airmen of our great state in an honorable fashion. I work for you and that will never change.

This is the year of professionalism in the Army and the National Guard and I have thought hard about what that means. The Sergeant Major of the Army, Kenneth Preston, says it means the Profession of Arms. I think it means self development, formal schooling, physical fitness, mental fitness, financial readiness and family.

We all know change is inevitable, it comes suddenly like a flat tire or broken water line, or it comes slowly like the Enlisted Promotion System. What we as professionals have to prepare for is the way to manage change so that we grow from it and become better Soldiers and citizens. I want each of you

to succeed and the way to do this is to prepare yourselves for change by being ahead of it when possible. Some may think the value of growing professionally is promotion and better assignments. I see the value as being a better leader and citizen, contributing more to the organization and being better prepared in your families.

So I want you to think of some New Year's resolutions that help you grow professionally. Enroll in Structured Self Development, Warrior Leaders Course, Advanced Leaders Course, and Senior Leaders Course. Do your best to develop yourself into a better leader and you will be amazed at the rewards that will come your way.

Thank you all for what you do
Bayonet 7 out.

Snap Shots

A look at some of the recent highlights in the Alabama National Guard



Contributed/photo

Lt. Col. Shannon Hancock, the Alabama National Guard's liaison to Romania, delivers gifts – toys, sweets and fruit to children at the Christian Center for children in Tulcea, Romania on St. Nicholas Day. Through the State Partnership Program that the Alabama National Guard has with Romania, Hancock spearheaded an effort to collect gifts and funds from Alabama Guardsmen.



Contributed/photo

Daphne High School was presented with the Army National Guard national ranking trophy as part of the sixth annual MaxPreps Tour of Champions. Daphne finished No. 11 in the final rankings and is one of 50 schools being honored on this season's tour. The MaxPreps Tour of Champions presented by the Army National Guard recognizes the finest high school football teams in the country through various celebrations and formal ceremonies. The Football Tour honors 50 of the top scholastic teams in America. Representatives from the Army National Guard presented each football team with the Army National Guard national ranking trophy in recognition of their outstanding achievements throughout the 2010 season. Sgt. 1st Class Wheeler and Staff Sgt. Chad Davis presented Coach Glenn Vickery with the prestigious Army National Guard national ranking trophy. "They seemed pretty excited to get it," said Wheeler. "It's a good program."



Cynthia Bachus/photo

Soldiers with JFHQ-AL conduct their first formation in the new Joint Force Headquarters building in Montgomery January 8.

Ordnance group prepares for Kosovo deployment

by Pfc. Eric Roberts
131st MPAD

It was early morning. The air that escaped from the Alabama Army National Guard Soldiers mouths froze and drifted away into the morning clear sky.

“Fire in the hole!” shouted a soldier. “Fire in the hole!”

All eyes turned down range, as the soldier began to work on the radio. As he flipped buttons, the Soldiers silently and reverently prepared themselves for the outcome.

With one resounding “ka-boom,” the explosives detonated, the ground shook and the on-looking soldiers cheered. The training mission was successful.

Members from the 666th Ordnance Group (EOD) participated in training at the Pelham Range, January 8 in Render Safe Procedure, in preparation for deployment to Kosovo.

For the group training is much more than just an exercise to fill up the weekend duty. The training encompasses proficiency, teamwork and camaraderie amongst the ranks.

“The training builds proficiency,” said Sgt. Anthony Blackmon from the 666th. “The training develops team cohesion, and ensures that the leaders and team members are comfortable with each during the mission.”

Training builds not only proficiency and teamwork, it builds pride in the Guard and the upcoming mission to Kosovo.

“We must stay proficient,” said 1st Lt. Bryce Williams, the



Eric Roberts/photo

Members of the 666th Ordnance Group (EOD) roll out detonation cord during training at Pelham Range on January 8. The group was training for an upcoming deployment to Kosovo.

operations officer. The proficiency of training ties into life skills, and it instills pride and admiration in the unit and the Guard’s mission to Kosovo. It is not every day that Guard members get a chance to deploy to help a young nation fight more than just combat battles.

The mission to Kosovo runs much deeper than the untrained eye can see. The mission encompasses the building of a new nation through teamwork.

As the only EOD team in the young nation the unit will train the multicultural police force and military. The unit will promote teamwork as the unit

makes the young nation safer for the people who call Kosovo home.

Likely the unit will be remembered for removing explosives. Though, when the unit returns safely home to Alabama, they will have removed more than many thought possible.

“It is not every day you get to deploy to a place like Kosovo,” said Williams. The unit is there to not only make the country safer for the people by removing ordnance. The unit is there to help remove political and civil strife. The unit is there above all to help another country and another culture.

EOD Group returns home after historic deployment

by Sgt. Sandra Lucas
167h TSC

OPELIKA, Ala. - Under a bright blue sky and crisp temperatures, the members of the 111th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Group returned home to Opelika September 27. The yearlong deployment to Iraq in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and New Dawn marks a first in Army National Guard history, as the 111th was the first Army National Guard unit to serve as the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) Troy headquarters element.

Commander of the 111th, Col. Jose Atencio, said "Joint Task Force Troy consisted of Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, civilians, active and reserve. Each service brought something unique to the fight." Addressing the families, Atencio said he planned for every member of the unit to return home safe. His mission was a success.

A safe return was especially imperative to the family of Spc. Adam Lollis. "I was really happy when they



Sandra Lucas/photo

Spc. Adam Lollis receives a heartfelt welcome home from his grandmother Janice Harvey Lollis, Thursday at the homecoming for the 111th EOD Group in Opelika, Al.

called and said he was home," said Janice Harvey Lollis, Spc. Lollis' grandmother. That was not the case on February 6, 1968, when Lollis' grandfather, Maj. Charles William Lollis, was killed in action while serving in Vietnam.

To honor her husband's service, Janice Lollis put together a compilation of excerpts from letters written by Major Lollis during his tour of duty in Vietnam. "We waited over 40 years for a Lollis to come home," she said.

Freedom Salute honors 135th Expeditionary Sustainment Command Soldiers

by Spc. Katie Dowd
167h TSC

Soldiers of the 135th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary), of Homewood, filed into the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Birmingham, January 23, to attend the Freedom Salute Campaign in honor of their year long deployment. The 135th returned from Afghanistan in October 2010, after serving as a joint sustainment command. The 135th commanded 10,000 service-members from the Air Force, Marines, Navy and Army.

Each Soldier was presented with

various tokens of appreciation based on the individual number of deployments. Soldiers on first deployment received: an American flag in a case, a commemorative coin, a "Defender of Freedom" certificate, a set of lapel pins and a Center of Influence lapel insignia and medallion for them to present to their employer. Those on their second deployment received: a certificate for a ring and a clock for their spouse. Soldiers on their third deployment received a wooden picture plaque.

Organizations that supported
(Please see 135th, page 7)



Katie Dowd/photo

American flags in a decorative case.

Alabama hosts Adjutants General during Conference

by Spc. Brenda Thomas
Staff Writer

The first U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Regional Adjutants General Conference took place Feb. 3, 2011. The Alabama National Guard hosted the conference in their new Joint Force Headquarters building in Montgomery, Ala. The Alabama Guard welcomed Gen. James D. Thurman, Commanding General, U.S. Army Forces Command; Florida National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Emmett R. Titshaw Jr.; North Carolina National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Gregory A. Lusk; South Carolina National Guard Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Robert E. Livingston Jr.; Tennessee National Guard Adjutant General, Terry M. Haston; and Alabama's newly appointed Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Perry G. Smith.

The conference provided an opportunity for each state leader to discuss the issues their state is facing. This allowed for collaboration between the states as well as between the reserve components and the active duty components. Gen-



Brenda Thomas/photo

Several Adjutants General attended the first U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Regional Adjutants General Conference in Montgomery. Pictured from left to right are: Maj. Gen. Terry Haston, Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, Gen. James Thurman, Maj. Gen. Gregory Lusk, Maj. Gen. Emmett Titshaw and Maj. Gen. Robert Livingston

eral Thurman said his role in this conference was to "reach out to our Adjutants General of the states...and hear their concerns and make sure I can be their voice." The general officers spent the morning discussing their respective issues and possible courses of action. "It's about building relationships and maintaining those relationships," said Maj. Gen. Titshaw (Fla.). "The relationship between the reserve components and the active components has never

been better. It's up to us to maintain that."

General Thurman said he felt the conference was a success, and he had several issues to take back to FORSCOM headquarters for further insight. "It's the ability to have a good dialogue about the important issues we're facing not only as an army but as a nation," said Gen. Thurman. "It builds trust and confidence."

(135th continued from page 6)

the 135th during their deployment were each recognized as an "Outstanding Center of Influence." Kratos Weapons Systems Solutions and CSX Railroad were both presented framed mosaic prints in appreciation for their devotion to helping the soldiers and their family members throughout the deployment.

In addition to presenting the Soldiers and supporters with tokens of appreciation, members of the official

party spoke words of inspiration and thanks to the crowd. The honored guests were: Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, Adjutant General of Alabama; Command Sgt. Maj. Bill Jones, Command Sergeant Major of Alabama; Maj. Gen. Joe Harkey, Commanding General of the 167th Theater Sustainment Command; and Command Sgt. Maj. Richard Weems of the 167th.

Maj. Gen. Harkey said, "For a National Guard unit to go and support the mission and a 30,000 troop surge

and be totally successful in feeding, fueling and supporting the soldiers; no one will be able to thank you enough. We will forever be indebted to you."

The Freedom Salute Campaign is a program that recognizes troops, family members and other supporters for their devotion and sacrifices that were made during the deployment. It is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history.

Alabama Guardmembers to form specialized recovery team

by Spc. Brian C. Canady-Unit
Public Affairs Representative
440th Chemical Company

The premier response force for defense support for civilian authorities for the state of Alabama is what government leaders are calling the Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package (CERF-P).

There are currently only sixteen other states that have this specialized group of emergency responders; Alabama makes seventeen. The units selected for this mission include the 145th Chemical Battalion, Centreville, Ala.; the 440th Chemical Company, Vincent and Clanton, Ala.; the 690th Chemical Company, Mobile, Ala.; the 187th Fighter Wing, Montgomery, Ala.; and the 117th Air Refueling Wing, Birmingham, Ala. These units were selected due to their specialized nature and training in chemical and medical operations.

These specialized teams will receive extensive training in search and extraction, mass causality decontamination and medical treatment during a natural or manmade disaster. Training will take place in various locations around the country over a period of about eight months.

These courses will prepare these Soldiers and Airmen to overcome a number of obstacles they may face during their missions. They are able



Brian Canadyphoto

Members of the CERF-P (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear, high-yield Explosive (CBRNE) Enhanced Response Force Package) team perform a mass decontamination.

to support any state or territory within the United States. If a disaster occurs, the CERF-P team mobilizes within a specified window of time upon alert.

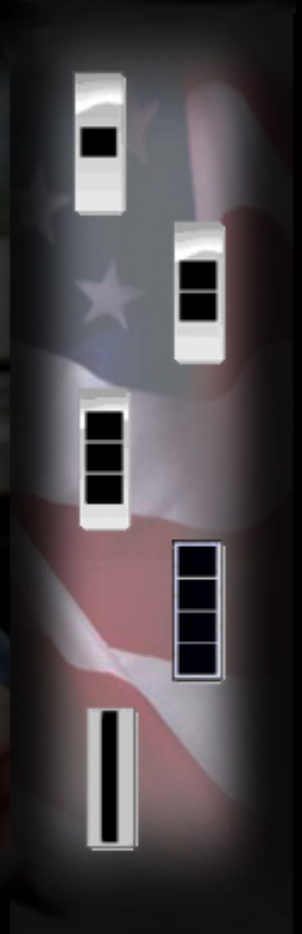
"I am really looking forward to this training and am glad to accept this mission," said Capt. Robert O'Brien, Alabama CERF-P Operations Officer. "The fact that Alabama has been selected for this training and that I get to use my knowledge as a Chemical Operations Officer is awesome."

Currently there are approximately 200 members of the

Alabama Army Guard and Air Guard collectively training for the elite team. The CERF-P team is one of two joint training operations in the state.

"I am proud to be able to work alongside the Air Guard," said O'Brien. The training process will culminate with a five-day validation and certification process done by the Joint Interagency Training and Education Center (JITEC), a division of homeland security. The validation process will take place sometime in September, at which point the unit will be fully mission ready.

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